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GENERAL

1. British and French see East-West meeting with broad agenda possible:

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A French Foreign Ministry official sees the Soviet note of 28 September as opening the way to a revival of "Churchill's idea for a general review of the world situation," an approach which, he believes, would appeal to Frenchmen who oppose EDC.

The initial British reaction to the note is that the Western powers cannot break off the exchange now and should restate their position along the lines of their 2 September note. A Foreign Office representative offered his personal opinion that the West should accept an invitation to a four-power meeting even if it leads to a long inconclusive conference like the Palais Rose meetings in 1951.

The American embassy in London notes strong sentiment in favor of Churchill's 11 May proposal for an informal top-level conference which he reiterated on 28 September. This sentiment is borne out by the Labor Party's foreign affairs resolution and editorial comment generally.

Comment: French press reactions generally agree that the chance for negotiations offered by the Soviet note should not be rejected, and that Communist China cannot be excluded if talks are to be held on world-wide problems.

2. Soviet and Chinese propaganda differs on Mao Tse-tung:

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Soviet and Chinese Communist pronouncements on the fourth anniversary of the Peiping regime on 1 October show a continuing conflict with respect to Mao Tse-tung's personal stature. In emphasizing Mao's leadership, Peiping has resumed a trend which was halted after the downfall of Beria last July.

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In accordance with Moscow's long-standing refusal to recognize Chinese claims for Mao as a theorist and Soviet emphasis since Stalin's death on "collective leadership," Malenkov's anniversary message to Mao lavishly praised the accomplishments of the Chinese people and the Peiping regime but did not refer to Mao's personal leadership.

In contrast, Peiping's official slogans for the occasion give the place of honor to Mao, "great leader of the Chinese people," and other Chinese statements attribute the regime's successes primarily to Mao and only thereafter to the Communist Party, the government, and Soviet aid.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

3. Iran's prime minister now favors immediate Majlis by-elections:

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Prime Minister Zahedi told Ambassador Henderson on 29 September that he now favors immediate by-elections to fill the 57 vacant Majlis seats resulting from

Mossadeq's discontinuance of the elections last year. He decided on this move in order to attain a working Majlis, as the 23 incumbent members do not plan to resign and the shah is unwilling to dissolve the parliament.

Zahedi believes a Majlis quorum could be created within two months if his plan were carried out. He prefers that the proposals for an oil settlement be submitted to the Majlis in December rather than next spring after regular general elections.

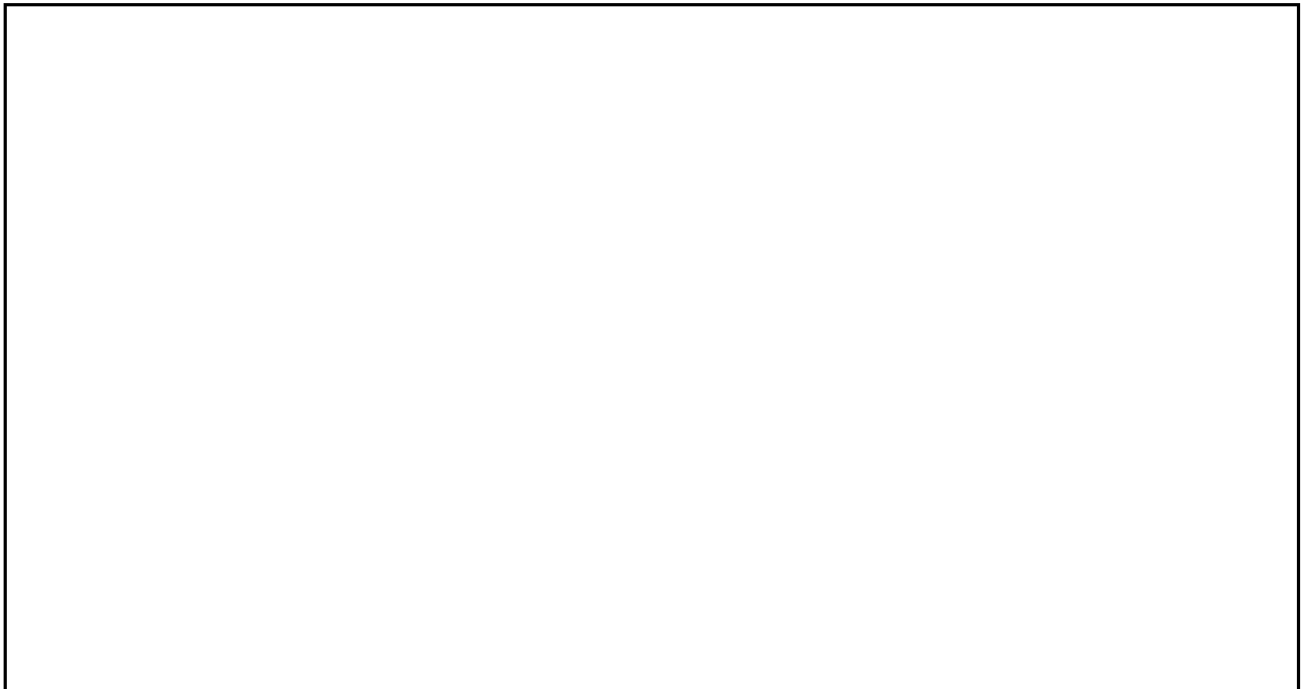
Comment: This is the first indication that Zahedi plans to tackle the oil question at an early date.

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8. Continuation of Berlin food distribution opposed by British, French and German authorities:

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Ambassador Conant reports that British and French authorities concur with Berlin and West German officials in opposing continuation of Berlin food distribution for

East Germans after 3 October. They fear that punitive measures against parcel recipients are leading to increased resentment against the United States and that the initial profit gained by the scheme is about to turn into a loss.

German authorities have also stressed the importance of regaining freedom of travel, which is now curtailed by Soviet zone authorities because of the food distribution. The ambassador states that RIAS has received numerous letters from East German listeners complaining of the punitive measures and emphasizing the desirability of more freedom of movement.

Comment: Over 2,000,000 parcels have been distributed under the second food program since 27 August at a daily rate of 60,000 to 70,000. While the East zone press has given little attention to the food program in recent weeks and confiscations have been less frequent, restrictions on travel to Berlin are still in effect.

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